

Message Text

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60

ACTION ARA-20

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 CIAE-00 PM-07 INR-10 L-03 NSAE-00

NSC-10 PA-04 RSC-01 PRS-01 SPC-03 SS-20 USIA-15

ACDA-19 IO-14 EB-11 COME-00 TRSE-00 INT-08 CIEP-02

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FM AMEMBASSY CARACAS

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 1993

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EO 11652: NA

TAGS: ENRG VE

SUBJECT: PRESS REPORTS ON US-VENEZUELAN OFFICIALS'
STATEMENTS ON ENERGY RESOURCES

REF: STATE 237608

1. I HAVE NOT MADE ANY REQUEST TO VENEZUELAN GOVERNMENT TO INCREASE VENEZUELA'S OIL PRODUCTION OR SALES TO U.S., NOR HAVE I EXPRESSED TO ANY MEMBERS OF PRESS "SATISFACTION AT PROSPECTS VENEZUELA MAY INCREASE ITS OIL SALES TO U.S." IN FACT, SO FAR AS MEMORY SERVES, I HAVE NOT DISCUSSED VENEZUELAN OIL WITH PRESS IN THIS CALENDAR YEAR. I HAVE NOT THOUGHT IT USEFUL TO REFUTE ALLEGATIONS TO THAT EFFECT WHICH HAVE BEEN CARRIED IN LOCAL PRESS, BUT IF ASKED BY LOCAL JOURNALISTS, EMBASSY WILL ISSUE APPROPRIATE DENIAL. FACT IS, AS DEPARTMENT AWARE, THERE IS NO SCOPE FOR EXPANSION OF VENEZUELAN OIL PRODUCTION WHICH IS VIRTUALLY AT CAPACITY, AND DESTINATION OF VENEZUELA'S OIL EXPORTS (EXCEPT THOSE OF SMALL STATE OIL COMPANY) IS CONTROLLED BY OIL COMPANIES, NOT BE VENEZUELAN GOVERNMENT.

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2. REGARDING STATEMENT BY UNDERSECRETARY CASEY, EMBASSY HAD RECEIVED FULL TEXT HIS REMARKS THROUGH USIA CHANNEL AND WAS THEREFORE AWARE THAT HIS REMARKS RE POSSIBLE DEVELOPMENT OF ORINOCO BELT HAD BEEN TAKEN OUT OF CONTEXT BY PRENSA LATINA AND LOCAL PRESS. WE REGARDED MISQUOTATIONS IN LOCAL PRESS AS UNFORTUNATE BUT NOT SERIOUS, AND DID NOT THINK IT ADVISABLE TO ISSUE CLARIFICATION SINCE SUCH STORIES THAT MAKE PAGE ONE TODAY ARE FORGOTTEN HERE BY TOMORROW.

3. IT MAY BE OF INTEREST TO DEPARTMENT TO KNOW, HOWEVER, THAT PORTION OF UNDERSECRETARY CASEY'S SPEECH THAT RELATED TO VENEZUELA, WHICH AMOUNTED TO ONLY A PART OF ONE SENTENCE, WAS TREATED BY THE PRESS HERE, IN TYPICAL FASHION, AS IF IT HAD BEEN THE MAIN THEME OF HIS SPEECH. EL NACIONAL HEADLINE READ "WASHINGTON ASKS VENEZUELA TO RESOLVE ITS ENERGY CRISIS," AND EL UNIVERSAL HEADLINE READ "VENEZUELAN OIL OF VITAL IMPORTANCE FOR U.S., WILLIAM CASEY DECLARES." THIS TYPE OF EXTREME "LOCAL-ITIS" MAKES IT DESIRABLE THAT WE TAKE CARE IN ANY U.S. OFFICIAL STATEMENTS THAT MENTION DEVELOPMENT OF NEW PETROLEUM RESERVES IN VENEZUELA TO AVOID IMPLICATIONS THAT WE ARE COUNTING ON NEW OIL SOURCES HERE THAT VENEZUELA HAS NOT YET MADE PUBLIC DECISION TO DEVELOP.

4. MINMINES PEREZ LASALVIA'S STATEMENT, QUOTED PARAGRAPH TWO REFTEL, APPEARS TO BE CONDENSED VERSION OF HIS REMARKS WHICH REPORTED IN FULL BY FBIS DECEMBER 2. THESE REMARKS GOT LITTLE PLAY IN PRESS HERE AND ARE ESSENTIALLY REHASH OF STATEMENTS THAT PEREZ HAS MADE ON NUMEROUS OCCASIONS IN PAST. IF THEY HAVE ANY SIGNIFICANCE, IT IS MAINLY AS GRIST FOR COPEI PROPAGANDA MILLS HERE DURING CURRENT ELECTION CAMPAIGN.

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